

David Abrams

Words of Wisdom: Abrams Edition

During my sophomore year in high school, I decided that I wanted to be emancipated from my father. I soon learned that it would be harder than I thought. At the time, I was living with my father, stepmother, and seven other siblings. We stayed back in the boonies of Kitsap County Washington in a five bedroom 80 year old cabin, with the nearest neighbor six miles away. I was signing the last emancipation paper work, and my dad and I said our goodbye, when his words hit me the hardest. When we left the courthouse that day, my father said six words that have stuck with me until now, “Don’t let anyone steal your dreams.”

The year was 1999, and I was sixteen years old and just moved from the city of Seattle to the boonies way out of my element. I was attending Bremerton High School – a four story brick building that looked like Walla-Walla prison. It had mirror tint windows with revolving doors in the front; in the inside, it had light tan bricks with royal blue lockers aligning either side. It was located in the city right outside Kitsap County, where I was staying. Kitsap County looks like a national forest with hills of pine trees as far as the eye can see and an abundance of wildlife. When I used to walk through the woods, I could see bears, raccoons, deer, and all sorts of different types of animals. My house was located about twenty miles outside the city limits. To get to it, I had to drive down a winding dirt road with potholes and no rail guard. The house itself sat on the edge of the cliff with a view of the freeway. It had one of those wood burning furnaces, which heated the whole house. The only bad part about that was I had to chop firewood every week. I loved it there sometimes, especially in the summer, but I still missed the city life.

I was tired of living at home, and I was ready to venture out on my own. At the time, I was sixteen years old and living with my dad Donald, stepmother Nora, and her four kids Ricky,

Ryan, Byron, and Michelle. In addition, living with us was my older brother Naaman and one of my little sisters Marcia. My sisters Jessica, Leilam, Sarena, and Racheal had already moved out or were living with my mom. My dad was a hardworking, dedicated father who raised all seven of us by himself until he married my stepmother Nora in 1998. Nora was a tall slender Pacific Islander who wore too much makeup and drank excessively. She was ten years younger than my dad was but looked five years older. My dad had always taught us to respect our elders, but I never respected her. She was a selfish heartless woman that never saw me as part of her family unless my dad was around, but when he was not she turned back into the evil stepmother that I knew she was. Nora and I argued constantly, until the point where my brother Naaman had to break us up. I had finally had enough and decided to talk to my dad about being emancipated. My dad and I talked about it for one month and then set the date, February 1999.

We met at the courthouse on February 18, 1999 and we signed the emancipation papers. When I left the courthouse with my dad and moved all my things, reality set in. I was so excited and scared at the same time. My dad told me that he was not worried because he knew that he had raised me to be independent and self-reliant. We sat in the car and talked about what it meant to be responsible for my own actions and my livelihood. He also emphasized that school should come first no matter what. After our conversation, I was getting out of the car and my dad grabbed me by the arms and said, "Don't let anyone steal your dreams." At the time, I thought I knew what he was trying to say, and over the years, he would always end with that phrase. Until now, I keep those words deep in my heart and apply them in my everyday life.

I believe that my dad was simply trying to say, that no matter what I do in life or where I go the people that are around will have an impact on my life. That is where his saying, "Don't let anyone steal your dreams" comes into play. If negative people who are always trying to bring me

down surround me, the temptation to quit may arise. Having positive people around that are motivated and have goals will help me to reach my own goals and eventually succeed in life.